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IDENTICAL LETTERS DATED 18 MARCH 1999 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF SAUDI ARABIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL AND TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you, enclosed herewith, the text of a letter dated 17 March 1999 from the Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia addressed to the Director-General of Civil Aviation of the Republic of Iraq, concerning the violations of Saudi airspace by Iraqi aircraft en route to Jiddah. These violations infringe upon the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and constitute an open challenge to the resolutions of the United Nations, of which they are in flagrant contravention.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Abdulrahman S. AL-AHMED
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

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Annex

Letter dated 17 March 1999 from the Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority of Saudi Arabia addressed to the Director-General of Civil Aviation of Iraq

We have the honour to inform you that on Tuesday, 16 March 1999, an Iraqi aircraft headed for Jiddah violated the airspace of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. For humanitarian reasons, and as the aircraft was transporting pilgrims, the violation which had just been committed was overlooked, and the aircraft was authorized to land and to discharge its passengers before taking off again, in the knowledge that this was a violation of United Nations resolutions and an infringement of the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

On Wednesday, 17 March 1999, another aircraft violated Saudi airspace as it was heading towards Jiddah. While the captain of the aircraft was advised that he was prohibited from entering Saudi airspace without prior authorization, he continued his course. The air controller then informed him that if he persisted in his violation, the aircraft would be seized and the crew and passengers detained. Nevertheless, the captain appeared to ignore this warning and continued on his path, landing at King Abdul-Aziz International Airport in Jiddah.

It should be recalled in this connection that these violations come in addition to a previous violation committed by an Iraqi Airlines aircraft in 1997 that was overlooked by the Saudi authorities at the time.

We wish to point out that violations committed by Iraqi aircraft are both an infringement of the sovereignty of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and an open challenge to the resolutions of the Security Council.

Consequently, we have the honour to inform you that should such violations recur, and should an aircraft of any kind land illegally in our territory, we should be compelled to seize it and hand it over to the United Nations together with its crew.

(Signed) Ali Ibn Abdulrahman AL-KHALAF
Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority
of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia